

Washington, DC – U.S. Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) announced nearly \$6.5 million in funding secured for important agricultural research in the 23rd Congressional District.

“Ranching and agriculture are the backbone of our Texas heritage,” said Congressman Rodriguez, whose district stretches from San Antonio to El Paso and down to the U.S.-Mexico border. “I’m glad that this funding is now firmly in place to ensure the continuation of important research to protect our agricultural heritage, improve the safety of our food and help us use our resources more wisely.”

At Sul Ross State University in Alpine, \$1.434 million will go to a Sustainable Agriculture Water Conservation Project. The goal is to create a basin-wide management plan for the Rio Grande region, where water is a scarce commodity. Domestic, agricultural and industrial needs can be better met through wiser usage and planning.

“This funding supports critical research focused on limited resources within the Rio Grande Basin,” said Ricardo Maestas, President of Sul Ross State University. “The exceptional support for Sul Ross State University on the part of Congressman Rodriguez and his staff provides opportunities for faculty and students which has a positive impact in the region and beyond.”

Five projects through Texas A&M AgriLife, totaling \$5.05 million will receive funding. They include:

An efficient irrigation project - \$1.61 million

To provide training, education and technical assistance to agricultural producers, urban residents and municipal water system operators, teaching them about irrigation system efficiency

The Designing Foods for Health research program - \$1.385 million

To develop fruits and vegetables that help ward off diseases. Such research is particularly relevant in Texas, which has some of the highest rates of obesity and overweight in the nation, which often lead to diseases like diabetes and hypertension

Irrigation research activities - \$1.16 million

Research to cover all 31 Texas counties in the Rio Grande Basin watershed, which will provide training and technical assistance to agricultural producers, urban residents, irrigation district personnel, municipal water system operators, consulting engineers, irrigation district managers and others

Beef improvement research - \$693,000

Seeks to examine differences in the behavioral and physiological responses of cattle based on different types of feed. Knowledge gained from these studies, in combination with educational programs will significantly reduce feed input costs as well as the environmental impacts of beef production systems

Wool research project - \$206,000

Research with scientists in Wyoming, Montana and New Mexico to develop a fine-wool sheep capable of producing significantly finer and more valuable wool that is well-adapted to western ranges in the United States. Project will provide technological support for projects designed to increase profitability of sheep and goat enterprises and improve productivity and safety of western rangelands

Congressman Rodriguez has been a strong advocate for ranching and farming communities in the 23rd Congressional District. In FY09, he secured \$6.48 million in funding for these projects.

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